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Security Council

Sixty-first year

Provisional

5369th meeting

Friday, 10 February 2006, 10.30 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Bolton	(United States of America)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Mayoral
	China	Mr. Wang Guangya
	Congo	Mr. Biabaroh-Iboro
	Denmark	Ms. Løj
	France	Mr. Duclos
	Ghana	Nana Effah-Apenteng
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Peru	Mr. De Rivero
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Bader
	Russian Federation	Mr. Smirnov
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Thomson
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Manongi

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan

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06-23902 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Afghanistan

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Afghanistan in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Farhâdi (Afghanistan) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Guéhenno to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to the following documents: S/2006/89, which contains a letter dated 9 February 2006 from the representative of Afghanistan; and photocopies of a letter dated 9 February 2006 from the representative of Afghanistan, transmitting a copy of the Afghanistan Compact adopted at the conclusion of the international London Conference on Afghanistan, which will be issued as a document of the Council under the symbol S/2006/90.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations. I give him the floor.

Mr. Guéhenno (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to provide an update to the Security Council on developments in Afghanistan. I will focus mainly on the outcome of the international Conference just held in London, recent political events surrounding the formation of the parliament, and the security situation on the ground in Afghanistan.

First, with respect to the London Conference, the Secretariat reiterates its deep thanks to the Governments of the United Kingdom and Afghanistan for the outstanding preparation and organization of the Conference held on 31 January and 1 February.

The achievements of the Conference were numerous. Above all, it served as the venue for the solemn launching of the Afghanistan Compact, which I will comment on in greater detail. The London Conference also reasserted the unity of purpose and goals that has been the hallmark of the international community's engagement in Afghanistan. The participation of over 60 high-level delegations — including 23 foreign ministers and strong representation from Afghanistan's neighbours — sent an unmistakable signal of the international community's continuing resolve to support Afghanistan at this crucial stage in its transition. Finally, the Compact and the Conference recognized the leading role that the Afghan Government itself must play in the next phase of its history.

The Compact itself sets out an ambitious agenda, committing Conference participants to a sustained and prolonged engagement in Afghanistan's future. It is a realistic reflection of what is required to consolidate State-building efforts in Afghanistan, and especially to enable the nascent democratic institutions created by the Bonn process to meet the basic needs of the country, curb insecurity, control the narcotics industry, stimulate the economy, enforce the law, provide basic services to the Afghan population and protect the human rights of the citizenry. The Compact sets forth measurable and time-bound benchmarks in each of those areas and establishes a results-oriented action plan for the country's future.

The Compact recognizes, as the Bonn process did, that a schedule is necessary and that time is of the essence in the international community's efforts. The window of opportunity for the rebuilding of the

country will not be open forever, and a sense of urgency must continue to inspire the efforts of the Afghans and the international community. That is why the Compact's annex on timelines and benchmarks is so important. Those are the criteria against which the efforts of the international community and Afghanistan will be judged.

As the Secretary-General noted in London, the United Nations stands ready to assist the Afghan Government and the international community as they work together to meet those goals. As the co-chair of the Compact's Monitoring and Coordination Board, the United Nations special representative will fully support the Government in bringing transparency and coherence to the international assistance effort. Only with the full support of the Security Council and the international community, however, will that be possible.

(*spoke in English*)

Substantive discussions took place on each of the Compact's main themes. On security, the continuing role of the international military presence was welcomed. States in a position to commit new forces to support the expansion of NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) were encouraged to do so. It was also recognized by Conference participants that stability cannot be achieved through military means alone. The successful development of functioning Afghan security forces was identified as a primary measure of the success of the international community.

The need for increased assistance to the justice sector reform effort was also emphasized, as was the importance of building legislative bodies and strengthening public administration throughout the country. There was also a call for international support for the Afghan Government's transitional justice action plan.

The Government of Afghanistan presented its interim national development strategy, which was endorsed by Conference participants. There was also general recognition that donors should make a greater effort to channel more international assistance through the Government's budget.

Although the Conference was not intended as a pledging event, participating countries and organizations announced new financial assistance for Afghanistan, amounting to a total of $10.5 billion dollars. That generosity demonstrates a continuing donor confidence in Afghanistan that is a credit to President Karzai's leadership and to the clarity of vision evident in the interim national development strategy. As always, the full impact of those pledges will be felt only if they are disbursed in a timely and efficient manner.

The growing threat to stability posed by the illegal drug trade was addressed as a cross-cutting theme. The Government of Afghanistan launched its new National Drug Control Strategy, and donors announced new pledges to the Counter Narcotics Trust Fund. Conference participants acknowledged the need for increased international assistance in line with the scale of the problem.

In sum, the Afghan Government committed itself to meeting a wide range of goals over the next five years and unveiled its strategies for doing so in a number of sectors. In return, the international community made strong expressions of long-term support, coupled with financial commitments. Those pledges must now be brought to bear on the Compact if the promise of the London Conference is to be fulfilled.

I would like to turn now to the workings of the first session of the recently inaugurated national parliament. To date, parliamentary debates have been characterized by an inclusive and democratic process — leading to a number of women, minority representatives and lesser-known personalities playing a prominent role in discussions. The upper and lower houses have elected their administrative boards and are reviewing the rules and procedures for the National Assembly. While discussions on the formation of political groups are ongoing, there are early signs that groups may form along ethnic or regional lines. A final decision on the mechanism for the vote of confidence in the Cabinet has yet to be taken by parliament.

Significant attention has been devoted by parliament to the security situation. The lower house alone devoted four days to discussing emerging threats to the country's stability. Despite the fact that parliament is making efforts to address public concerns, the Afghan media has highlighted the pressing need for the parliament to move beyond its internal workings and make meaningful progress on the key issues affecting the population as a whole.

Turning to the security situation in Afghanistan, recent weeks have seen a rising level of insurgent attacks in the south-east and south-west, and an escalation of factional tensions in the north-west. Some of the fiercest fighting in recent years between anti-Government elements and Afghan forces was reported to have taken place in Helmand province. The largest of these took place on 3 and February in Helmand province, when police and Afghan National Army soldiers were ambushed by up to 200 insurgents. In the ensuing battle, which lasted five hours, three Afghan National Police officers were reportedly killed and nine wounded.

The recent publication in European newspapers of cartoons depicting the prophet Muhammad sparked widespread demonstrations over the past week, with groups ranging in number from 150 to as many as 5,000. Although largely peaceful, demonstrations turned violent in the five provinces of Baghlan, Faryab, Laghman, Parwan and Zabul. In Maimana, Faryab province, and in Laghman province, in particular, it is believed that the cartoon protests provided a platform for factional tensions and clashes linked mostly to local dynamics preceding the cartoon issue.

On 7 February, demonstrators in Pul-i-Khumri, Baghlan province, threw stones at the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) base, the offices of three non-governmental organizations and the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, smashing windows and damaging vehicles. One Dutch soldier and two demonstrators were injured. The main clash that day, however, occurred in Maimana, where protestors using firearms and grenades breached the perimeter of a Norwegian PRT compound. In ensuing clashes with the Afghan National Police, three individuals were killed and five Norwegian troops were injured. ISAF redeployed its quick-reaction forces from Mazar-e-Sharif to Maimana to provide additional support to the PRT. United Nations staff in Maimana were temporarily relocated to Shibergan on 7 February, and then to Mazar-e-Sharif on 8 February.

On 6 February in Laghman province, demonstrators clashed with police and Government officials, leaving one policeman dead. The same day, in Parwan province, demonstrators destroyed the office of a Turkish road construction company and looted some equipment, and then proceeded to attack the United States base at Bagram. Two demonstrators were killed and six policemen injured. On 8 February in Zabul, demonstrators clashed with the police and the Afghan National Army, leaving two dead.

Yesterday there were clashes in Herat between Shia and Sunni Muslims — involving hand grenades, stone-throwing, knife attacks and fist fights — which left at least five people dead. Fighting between the two groups happened as Shia were marking the commemoration of Ashura, the tenth day of Muharram. In an effort to calm the situation, President Karzai dispatched a delegation headed by Ismail Khan, the former Governor of Herat and current Minister of Energy, Water and Power, to mediate the situation. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) is closely monitoring the situation on the ground.

Also yesterday, four Canadian soldiers were slightly wounded in a roadside bomb attack in southern Kandahar province. Lastly, at least six Afghan soldiers were killed today, in two attacks by suspected Islamic rebels in the eastern province of Nuristan. Eight troops were also injured by explosions in two different districts of the province, according to a spokesman of the Defence Ministry in Kabul.

Since our last briefing to the Security Council, there have been further incidents of suicide bombings. On 2 February, a suicide bomber disguised as a woman killed three Afghan National Army soldiers and five civilians in Bak, Khost province. On 7 February, a suicide bomber blew himself up outside Afghan National Police headquarters in Kandahar city, killing himself and 13 others, including civilians and police personnel. Thirteen others were injured.

In the light of those events, I would reiterate what Special Representative of the Secretary-General Arnault noted in his last briefing to the Council.

> "The security dimension therefore remains at the heart of the joint efforts of the Government and the international community, both as a priority concern that needs to be addressed through military and non-military means and also as a limitation on the ability of the international community, and the United Nations in particular, to operate throughout the country." (*S/PV.5347, p. 3*)

It could not be more clear that improvements in security are essential if the promise of the Afghanistan Compact is to be realized.

In conclusion, I wish to inform the Security Council that the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Tom Koenigs, will take up his new assignment in Kabul on 16 February. As Council members are aware, the current mandate of UNAMA expires on 24 March. The Secretary-General will submit recommendations on the future role of the United Nations in Afghanistan by the middle of March.

The President: I thank Mr. Guehenno for his briefing.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I now invite Council members to a private meeting, following the adjournment of this meeting.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.